

The First Defenders

Experience of the Pennsylvania Companies First to Reach Washington After President Lincoln's Call for Troops in 1861

A civil war veteran who went to the front in '61 with the famous Sixth Massachusetts Volunteers wrote a letter to *The Sun* the other day. He had been reading the paper about some Pennsylvania troops who call themselves the First Defenders because they were the first volunteer soldiers to arrive in Washington in 1861 for the defence of the national capital.

The volunteer from Massachusetts read the story and launched into a contradiction. He said the Sixth Massachusetts was the first regiment to arrive in Washington. They got there April 19, 1861. He was in "that môle in Baltimore" and remembered "a rabble of men and young fellows" without guns, uniforms, officers or any sort of organization who occupied a box car at the station and who when they found the Sixth was in trouble went back home.

If all those military organizations mentioned by the Pennsylvania correspondent started from Philadelphia for Baltimore on April 17, he goes on, "they were a long time getting there."

If this survivor of the Massachusetts regiment had uttered these sentiments anywhere around Allentown, Pa., on Tuesday, April 18, 1911, he'd have found himself playing the rôle of storm centre. That was the fiftieth anniversary of the day the Pennsylvania troops reached Washington. Twenty-nine survivors of the 530 men and officers were having a reunion. The youngest of them is 68 and the oldest over 80, but the Massachusetts critic would have found them as ready to fight for their laurels now as they were to fight for their country half a century ago.

The dearest possession of every one of those twenty-nine old fellows is a bronze medal presented by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on October 1, 1891. These medals were made at the United States Mint in Philadelphia and bear the inscription "First in Defence of the Capital, April 18, 1861." All scoffers, whether from Massachusetts or any other State, are requested to take note of that date. And if they don't believe the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania they are further directed to read the following sworn statement made by Simon Cameron, July 4, 1866. Mr. Cameron was Secretary of War in 1861 when the first call for troops was made. He says:

"I certify that the Pottsville National Light Infantry was the first company of volunteers whose services were offered for the defence of the capital. A telegram reached the War Department on the 13th making the tender—it was immediately accepted. The company reached Washington on April 18, 1861, with four additional companies from Pennsylvania, and these were the first troops to reach the city of Government at the beginning of the war of the Rebellion."

The Massachusetts soldier who noticed "a rabble of young fellows" in a box car at Baltimore April 19 is more or less politely requested by the Pennsylvania survivors not to identify that rabble with them. They were already in Washington then, nursing some wounds they had acquired the day before at the hands of the inhospitable Baltimoreans in a mêlée of their own. As for their starting from Philadelphia and being a long time getting to the capital, the Massachusetts man again is a little misled. Most of them had never seen Philadelphia at that time.

The story of how they acquired the right to call themselves, as they do, First Defenders is an interesting one as told by the survivors at their fiftieth anniversary. Almost without exception these survivors are Pennsylvania Germans. The records of our last three wars show that when it comes to jumping to the defence of one's country these Pennsylvania Germans are quicker on the takeoff than anybody else.

They say they were the first to volunteer in the Mexican war. In 1861 they hustled over to Washington ahead of everybody else. When the Spanish-American war came along they had got the habit, and the Fourth Regiment Pennsylvania National Guard was the first to be mustered in at the State camp at Mount Gretna. This was in effect a regiment of Pennsylvania Germans. Two of its companies, B and D, were from Allentown, one being the actual descendant of the Allen Light Infantry, one of the five companies to reach Washington first in 1861.

These five companies were the Ringgold Light Artillery of Reading, the Logan Guards of Lewistown, the Allen Light Infantry of Allentown and the Washington Artillery and the National Light Infantry of Pottsville. They met at Harrisburg, where they had got the habit, and went on to Washington together. The Ringgold Light Artillery was the first to start and came pretty near being the very first of all the first defenders by getting to Washington ahead of everybody else.

QUICK TO ACT.
President Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops for three months service was issued on April 15. That morning the Ringgold Light Artillery, numbering 105 men and officers, was drilling with full ranks just outside of Reading. The proclamation of the President reached the telegraph operator while the company was at work and he hurried his younger brother off up the street with the despatch.

The boy knew the route by which the soldiers would return to their army and intercepted them as they marched back. Capt. McKnight must have been glad to get the news, for he gave the messenger a quarter, and quarters were scarce then, but they are now and in no time at all another despatch was on the wires, this time addressed to Gov. Curtin at Harrisburg.

"The Ringgold Light Artillery are on parade. Every one of them expects to be ordered on duty for the United States service before they leave their guns." Probably a Bostonian would have held up that despatch and straightened out its nouns and pronouns and verbs. But the Pennsylvania German, H. A. Lantz, who signed it for the company, was anxious to get the news, for he was handgiving his wife and three weeks old baby at home and was very much torn between contenting ideas as to what was the first duty of man in a case like his. The Captain's convictions, though, were clear enough for both.

"If you haven't reported for duty by 5 o'clock," said he, "I'll smash your bench to pieces!"

The young husband was still undecided at the hour named and sure enough around came the Captain, broke the bench up and carried off the recruit in triumph. In spite of these strenuous methods

equipment did not include muskets. But the men wore sabres and most of them carried pistols. They reached Harrisburg that evening about 8 o'clock and the Secretary of State of Pennsylvania at once notified Washington. The Secretary of War telegraphed in reply:

"Push forward company by first train. Arrangements were made to leave at 3 A. M. and if this plan had been carried out the Reading company would have been in Washington April 17, twenty-four hours ahead of the other Pennsylvanians and forty-eight hours in advance of the Sixth Massachusetts. The order was countermanded, however, and the Ringgold Light Artillery waited at Harrisburg for the four other troops."

The Logan Guards of Lewistown were the next to arrive. They marched across the Juniata River to Pennsylvania station on the evening of April 16, waited several hours for a train and reached Harrisburg early the next morning. If the Massachusetts man who thinks he's the real thing in first defenders wants to talk things over with a survivor of the Logan Guards he will find Major Robert W. Patton living

his company numbered only forty-seven, and the order had been to recruit to full strength before coming to Harrisburg. Another man might have waited a day and gone off with a muster roll of proper length. But not Capt. Yeager. With his forty-seven men at his back he left Allentown on the afternoon of April 17, reaching Harrisburg that evening.

He picked up three more recruits on the way, but inside of twenty-four hours had expelled one of his men for disobedience. "I stripped him myself in the middle of the street," he wrote back, "taking the whole uniform from him, and left him naked except for pants, stockings and shoes and took all his money that he received at Allentown except 10 cents."

This left the Captain with forty-nine men, whom he took to Washington later twenty-eight members of Small's Philadelphia Brigade were added to the Allentown company.

This Philadelphia brigade was probably the one noticed at Baltimore by the volunteer from Massachusetts. Most of its members did turn back from that city. But twenty-eight of them managed to get through with the Sixth Massachusetts, and they were the ones to be added to Capt. Yeager's force, already in Washington.

Capt. Yeager was an impetuous fighter and rapidly rose in command. A year later, June 1, 1862, he was killed in the battle of Fair Oaks on the very day that President Lincoln signed a commission making him Brigadier-General.

The two Pottsville companies left their town on the afternoon of April 17 and reached Harrisburg that night. They had

ton whether we were a this, that or the other regiment, or none at all. We'd come to help fight, and we were the first ones to show up. The Massachusetts fellows can't get a round that, and they needn't try."

THE MÊLE IN BALTIMORE.
All the five companies had been organized for some time. The National Light Infantry was started as far back as 1831, the Washington Artillery in 1842, the Ringgold Light Artillery in 1843, the Logan Guards in 1858 and the Allen Light Infantry in 1859. Some carried Springfield rifles, but most of those were out of date, and those promised at Harrisburg did not materialize.

That made no difference to the determined Pennsylvanians. They had set out for Washington, and they went right ahead. At 8 o'clock on the morning of April 18, having been mustered into the service of the United States by Capt. Seneca G. Simmons of the Seventh Infantry, they took the train for Baltimore.

With them went a detachment of fifty regulars from Company H, Fifth Artillery, under Lieut. Pemberton, who afterwards joined the Confederate army. At Baltimore the five were at that time in a tough connection for Washington and the troops were obliged to march about two miles across the city from one station to the other. Notice of the departure of the train had been telegraphed from Harrisburg and crowds had gathered in Baltimore. At 9 o'clock a meeting of the Maryland National Volunteers had been held which no stretch of the imagination could interpret as promising well for the approaching troops.

At Canton, a suburb of the city, they disembarked, and with a body of Baltimore

green and black and blue which adorned Ignatz's lower extremity, he said:

INJURED SHIN LINCOLN TOUCHED.

"You ought to be in the hospital." "No," said Ignatz, "I won't go to the hospital, but I wish I had a doctor."

"Inside of an hour there was a doctor for Ignatz, sent by that kindly visitor. That man was the greatest in 1860 years. His name was Abraham Lincoln."

Perhaps you think the First Defenders didn't cheer themselves hoarse at that point. Well, you could have heard them in the Allen House clear across the square.

Even Wilson Derr asked if somebody didn't say something. And later, when Mr. Gresser was telling the same incident to THE SUN representative, he took hold of his ankle with the reverence one shows for a sacred object and he said, with a little hitch in his voice:

"He, Abraham Lincoln, took my old leg in his own hands!"

Well, that's the way they got through Baltimore, and when they were finally jammed into the box cars waiting to take them on to Washington they heaved a sigh of relief until they noticed that the floor of the cars had been sprinkled with powder. They took to be a delicate attention from their Baltimore hosts of the afternoon. At any rate they scrupulously refrained from enjoying a soothing smoke and did not brogue quite easily until they disembarked at Washington. They were met there by Major McDowell of the regular army and marched to the Capitol.

The Massachusetts letter writer above quoted also states that the "House of Representatives was untenanted until the arrival of Ellsworth's Zouaves." Some of the solid Pennsylvanians who remember

unters. While they were hurrying hot-foot to Washington another lot of Pennsylvania Germans had got together and formed a regiment and it secured the coveted title of First. They were mustered in April 20, so that any way you look at it those "slow" Pennsylvania Dutchmen seem to be a race of Johnnies on the spot when it comes to war.

The five companies of First Defenders remained on guard at the Capitol for about twelve days. During this time two extra companies were formed out of the surplus of the original five and three more were recruited from Harrisburg, Doylestown and Carlisle. These ten companies became the Twenty-fifth Regiment.

Some of the companies were sent to guard the United States Arsenal opposite Alexandria. The others were detailed at different points. At the end of the three months they were mustered out at Harrisburg without having seen much severe service.

Many of them reenlisted in various regiments and served through the war. For instance, the original enlistment of the Ringgold Artillery was 105 men. Eighty-two of them reenlisted at the end of the three months, and of this number fifty-six became officers before the war was over. Of the Washington Artillery practically all the members reenlisted, notably in the Forty-eighth and Ninety-sixth Infantry and the Seventh Cavalry.

SOME REUNIONS.
The first reunion of the men who afterwards called themselves First Defenders wasn't much like their fiftieth. According to Col. Boshysell it was held by some of the original volunteers who had reenlisted and found themselves together at

the Sumter bombardment set the nation's nerves on edge and when the President's call for troops meant for men like themselves the only outlet for their inner tumult! There was Addison Gier, for instance, whose name doesn't suggest the Fatherland, but who harks back to it nevertheless. He belonged to the Ringgold Artillery.

"We'd been drilling the Fifteenth," he said, "and had got the news that we'd likely be called out. I was a carpenter, working for the Schuylkill Construction Company, and the next day was eating my noon lunch under a willow tree near the shop when along comes the boss and tells me that the call has come. Says I: 'Here's the key to my chest, Tom. Pick up my tools, will you, and put 'em away. I'm off.'"

"And with that I started for home. Inside of twenty-five minutes I was washed and had put on my uniform and was saying good-by to my sweetheart. And two hours later we were on our way to Harrisburg."

And there was Thomas Hammer, who had lived down around Pottsville but had gone to Philadelphia to clerk in a store. He'd been reading the papers a lot and had decided that there was going to be fighting if the Union was to be preserved. He had a sweetheart back near Pottsville as well as some relatives and he managed to get a vacation early in April and hurried home to them.

The day the Pottsville companies were getting ready to leave he told his family he was going to see them off. And did. For he enlisted himself and wrote back from Harrisburg to tell his sweetheart what had become of him.

He simply couldn't keep away from the war, that Thomas Hammer! When he came back from his three months service he married the girl he had so unceremoniously left behind him. But it didn't hold him very long. Inside of a few weeks he had enlisted again and he kept at it until the war was over, when he returned to his long suffering wife, and with only one relapse has been her devoted slave ever since.

That single fall from grace occurred during the Spanish-American War, when he started to raise a regiment with which he aspired to go to the front. His eyes shone and his white mustache twitched the day of the reunion when he was asked how he would feel if this country got into trouble with Mexico.

"Well, now," he said half apologetically, half proudly, "you know I just couldn't help wanting to go and do my part if there was any fighting for the country. I—I can't help it. It seems like my duty and I'm not comfortable if I don't do it."

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S GRIP.
Thomas Hammer's body is not built on so imposing a plan as his spirit. Anyway he was only a boy of 18 in '61 and not large for his age either.

"When Lincoln came along the line," he said, "and put out his hand—as big as two of mine—he gave me a grip which made me almost cringe down into my knees."

"What's the matter, sonny?" said he. "Mr. President," said I, "you pain me."

"But I cherish the memory of that grip of iron. It made you have absolute trust in the power of the man behind it." Mr. Hammer, still making up to his wife for his uncontrollable habit of going to war, brought her along with him to the reunion the other day. Charles Slingloff and Joel Betts, two other old Pottsville boys, also brought their wives. Mrs. Capt. Schaadt entertained the ladies and some local daughters of First Defenders and they laughed and cried together over the reminiscences of those who were old enough to have any.

Mrs. Betts told how her husband—he was only her sweetheart then—was on his way to work when the news came of Lincoln's call. His action makes one want to revise the common impression of the stolid deliberation of the German. According to his wife, young Joel said to himself: "Uncle Sam wants boys!" and with that he threw away his dinner pail and went straight off and enlisted.

As for Charlie Slingloff—well, if he was as pugnacious then as he is to-day he'd have tackled the Confederacy single handed and had the time of his life doing it. The business meeting at the fiftieth reunion was a somewhat informal affair, the veterans retaining a good deal of their early contempt for forms when real things are at stake. For instance, not quite content with the medals given them by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the First Defenders would like to have Congress recognize them in the same way. Mr. Potts of Pottsville thought it would be better if Congress would place tablets in the Capitol building recording the fact of the early arrival of the five Pennsylvania companies.

"Then they would be there forever and everybody would read the truth," said he. "What's the use of medals and tablets? I grumbled one of the comrades, 'so long as New England writes our histories and every schoolboy in the North is taught that the Sixth Massachusetts soldiers were the first to reach Washington?'"

"That's a twenty-four hour lie!" calmly remarked Charlie Slingloff, and he doesn't care whether peppy persons from the Bay State like his sentiments or not.

PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN WAYS.
These Pennsylvania Germans never were a weak kneed generation anyway. They came to this country, as the Puritans themselves did, because of religious persecution. Most of them are Lutherans and their pastors have been militant Christians of even ardent faith. In front of one of the Allentown churches is a tablet reminding the passerby that the Liberty bell was hidden there for safe keeping during the Revolutionary war. They tell of one of their own preachers who, like others of his calling, wore a uniform under his cassock, and taking off the latter as he stood in the pulpit, declared that there was a time for preaching and a time for fighting, and that the time for fighting had come.

They are thrifty, hardy, cleanly people. Allentown is so spick and span that it might serve as a model for Spiceland. There are so many tombstones in their cemeteries with the inscription, "At the age of 80 years," or thereabouts, that one must accuse them of going contrary to the Scriptures with its threescore years and ten. Altogether, a pretty fine set of folks, these Pennsylvania Germans. And as before remarked, uncommonly speedy in getting into a fight for the country.

A Strassburger's Work of Patience.

It's no wonder that patience is so much in vogue at the moment. It is the work of M. Paul Schmidt, a Strassburger, and the troops stationed in the famous cathedral city of 1848, in fact, for on April 18 there was a light snowfall, and it was so cold that the wet clothes of the soldiers froze on them.

The Allentown people those eastern Pennsylvanians are the most hospitable folks on the face of the earth anyway. They prepared a farewell dinner at the Eagle Hotel, then facing the square where the survivors were photographed the other day. Under each plate was a \$5 bank note contributed by the citizens.

The volunteers didn't get much further than these notes, for there was so much cheering and weeping and fond farewells that the impetuous Captain took his soldiers away, leaving their dinner practically untouched. The citizens turned in and gave \$3 a week to each family that was left in any sort of need, and when the company came back at the end of July, ragged, burned by the sun, thin and haggard, there was another dinner at the Eagle Hotel, and this time nothing but the dishes escaped the appetites of the hungry soldiers.

WHEN THE CALL CAME.
But how they did go back the other day to the stirring time when the echoes of



29 SURVIVORS OF THE "FIRST DEFENDERS" AT THEIR 50TH REUNION, ALLENTOWN, PA., APRIL 18, 1911.

right here in New York at 23 West Twelfth street.

When the call for troops came young Patton simply looked up his jewelry shop and helped hustle his company to Harrisburg, where he was commissioned a Lieutenant. He is not exactly "young Patton" now, but he's quite able to cope with any attempt to rob him and his comrades of their distinction as the only genuine first defenders.

The third company to arrive at Harrisburg was the Allen Light Infantry of Allentown, the scene of the recent anniversary celebration. At their head was Capt. Thomas Yeager. If any one is ever tempted to make a list of hotheaded, enthusiastic young soldiers the Allentown people will see that it includes the name of Thomas Yeager. In the early days of '61 they thought he was rather daft on the subject of war. He actually made a trip to Washington to look at the fortifications around the capital, and when he came back he was so indignant a dragoon that some of his men backed out of the company.

CAPT. YEAGER'S RECRUITING.
When the news of the firing on Fort Sumter came Capt. Yeager rushed off posthaste to Harrisburg to offer to Gov. Curtin the services of himself and his command. The result was that he received one of the first Captain's commissions issued for the civil war. Allentown people think it was the very first commission issued to an officer of volunteers. With it in his pocket he hurried back home and called on his company for volunteers to go to the defence of Washington.

His way of calling for them seems to have been peculiar to himself. For instance one member of the company, a shoemaker, was asked by the doughty Captain whether he was going with the rest. The young shoemaker had a wife and three weeks old baby at home and was very much torn between contenting ideas as to what was the first duty of man in a case like his. The Captain's convictions, though, were clear enough for both.

"If you haven't reported for duty by 5 o'clock," said he, "I'll smash your bench to pieces!"

The young husband was still undecided at the hour named and sure enough around came the Captain, broke the bench up and carried off the recruit in triumph. In spite of these strenuous methods

telegraphed their offer of services to Washington on April 15 and it had been accepted. But they wanted to recruit up to their full strength. In fact they went away with so large a complement of men that a third company was later formed out of the two.

IN OLD CLOTHES.
The three companies from Reading, Allentown and Lewistown had gone to Harrisburg wearing their own uniforms, which were of that charming variety peculiar to the private military organizations of that period. The Allen Light Infantry, for example, was arrayed in gray cloth with black and gold bullion trimmings. Very much gold bullion in fact, since every body, privates and all, wore epaulettes as big as a General's.

But the Pottsville recruits were not arrayed in military bibs and tuckers by any manner of means. Word had been sent from Harrisburg to wear their oldest clothes, as they would be uniformed there and would simply throw away their own things. They followed these instructions to the letter, much to their subsequent chagrin.

"Why," said William Irving, a survivor of the Pottsville National Light Infantry, "one of my sleeves was almost torn out of my coat and one of my boots—we wore boots then—had lost the heel. There was no time to uniform us at Harrisburg and we went on to Washington in our old clothes."

Going through the Baltimore mob added the finishing touches to my appearance, and it is a fact that I was not fit to face the public gaze when I reached Washington. I kept out of sight as much as possible, but I had to drill of course."

And one time when we were drawn up with our backs to some high officials I believe I came in for a good deal of their attention. I didn't mind their uncontrollable mirth, though, for the incident ended in our getting the uniforms we needed."

This may seem very amusing to the Sixth Massachusetts and the other regiments that went to the capital as complete organizations, properly equipped. But the First Defenders came more to wear that title to duty than to have been uniformly arrayed or to have been walking a-sensals on their march to the front in '61. As one of them said:

"By golly, the only thing we thought of was to get up and get there! And you bet they were glad to see us in Washing-

more police under Marshal Kane as escort started across the town. The regulars under Pemberton went first and the Ringgold artillery brought up the rear. The mob grew constantly larger and more aggressive and introduced the Pennsylvanians to a larger assortment of uncomplimentary epithets than they had ever dreamed existed.

Half way through the town Pemberton and his regulars left the volunteers and went off to Fort Mifflin. Their presence had exerted a restraining influence on the crowd which now, according to Capt. Schaadt, historian of the Allen Light Infantry, "lashed itself into a perfect fury." The unsavory missiles and scurrilous epithets were succeeded by bricks and cobblestones.

FIRST BLOOD OF THE CIVIL WAR.

Every one of a dozen of the survivors is morally certain that he was the first man hit. Col. Boshysell, then a private in the Washington Artillery and later superintendent for twenty years of the Philadelphia Mint, got his brickbat on the head, but thanks to his heavy cap it did no more than raise on his skull a large and painful monument to some Baltimorean's aim.

The Pennsylvanians think it is odd that the first blood that, according to their figuring, was shed in a war brought on by slavery, was that of an ex-slave, Nicholas Biddle, the colored servant of Capt. Wren of the Washington Artillery, was hit in the face with a brick and bled copiously. His portrait, by the way, still hangs in the armory of the militia company which succeeded the Washington Artillery.

David Jacobs of the Allentown company didn't lose so much blood as Biddle, but he lost a tooth. The other day at Allentown he proudly exhibited the former location of the dear dental departed.

Herly Wilson Derr, also of Allentown, was struck on the ear and has been deaf ever since. And Ignatz Gresser, he was of Allentown too, was hit on what he calls the knuckle of his ankle and was laid up for weeks. But he's glad of it.

"Why," declared one of the speech-makers at the First Defenders' banquet the other day, "I'd rather be Ignatz Gresser than the King of England. He was hit in the shin with a brick in Baltimore and while he was handgiving his sound after he got to Washington, a kindly man came along and looking at the wonderful color scheme of yellow and

sleeping that first night in Congressional chairs with their feet on desks will be puzzled by this statement. They do not think they are dreaming when they recall that first night. The Allen Light Infantry was quartered in the Vice-President's room near the Senate Chamber.

At this stage of the game their resourceful Capt. Yeager took pains to spread the report that although only 530 men had arrived on that train 5,000 more were on the way and would be there in an hour. He dropped in at the newspaper offices and also took his own way of adding nothing to the plain truth. For instead of announcing the arrival of 530 volunteers he made it 3,300 by the mere addition of a cipher.

The Pennsylvanians haven't a doubt that these exaggerated reports were promptly conveyed to the Confederates then encamped on the heights across the river. And they rather think that maybe they out and out saved the Union all by their lone 530 selves. Anyhow, they say, if they hadn't scared off the Confederates until those Massachusetts fellows could come and help there's no telling what might have happened. The Sixth did get in the next day and it must be recorded that the Pennsylvanians say:

"The Sixth Massachusetts was welcomed and fed by the First Defenders."

THANKED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Before the New Englanders arrived the troops from Pennsylvania had received new Springfield rifles. These came in cases from the arsenal and were opened in the presence of President Lincoln, Secretary of State Seward and Secretary of War Cameron. The President passed down the lines and shook hands with every one of the volunteer soldiers. Later, on July 22 of that same year, the following resolution was passed by the lower branch of Congress:

Resolved, That the thanks of this House are due and are hereby tendered to the 530 soldiers from Pennsylvania who passed Washington on the 18th day of April last for the defence of the national capital.

Apparently somebody besides the First Defenders themselves knew that they had come to town. The very alacrity, though, with which they responded to the President's call had something to do with the comparative inconspicuousness of their subsequent career. Not being a regiment they did not have the right to be called the First Pennsylvania Vol-

Newbern, N. C., on April 18, 1862. Capt. Wren presided and, says the Colonel, "the refreshments were principally liquid, but we had a good time."

Charles C. Potts says that the second reunion occurred in Libby Prison in 1863. At any rate James Smith of the Logan Guards, Col. Swayer of the Allen Light Infantry and William Heffner and Potts of the town named after the latter gentleman were present there at that time. They didn't have any refreshments worth speaking about, though, and he couldn't truthfully say that they had a very good time, but that wasn't their fault.

Since that time they have had many reunions. They have been the guests of the State of Pennsylvania and the guests of the nation. But when it comes to what they call down in that part of the country a set out the First Defenders are inclined to give the palm to the feast put before them by the Livingston Club of Allentown the other day. Trout, squab, champagne! Oh, well, after all this first defending brings its own reward in time.

But things were different that April day fifty years ago when Capt. Yeager led his company away on that business of national defence. The spring was backward then, as it is now. More so, in fact, for on April 18 there was a light snowfall, and it was so cold that the wet clothes of the soldiers froze on them.

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